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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States Parties

SWEDEN

V.82-34495

At the time of ratification, Sweden fulfilled the undertakings implied by the articles not specifically commented on below. A summary of work and organization for the promotion of sexual equality will be found in the appended fact sheet on Equality between Women and Men in Sweden and in "Step by Step", National Plan of Action for Equality, Apps. 1 and 2. Reference is further made to the Swedish Government's reply to UN request for information on the implementation of the programme of action for the second half of the UN Decade for Women (1981-09-16) and to the Swedish Government's reply to a previous UN questionnaire on the implementation during the period 1975-1978 of the World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year (May 1979, updated Nov. 1981), Apps. 3 and 4.

Article 1

In Sweden's opinion, the Convention should not have been confined to the discrimination of women. Instead it should have been given a wider approach, in terms of sexual discrimination. Changes with a view to sexual equality must include measures affecting men as well as women. This fundamental premise constitutes the starting point of Swedish efforts to achieve equality between women and men.

The Committee on Equality between Men and Women (cf. App. 1) is at present conducting a questionnaire survey of 5 000 men, together with a number of in-depth interviews, to elucidate conditions for men and male attitudes concerning equality between women and men.

Article 2

Reference is made to the commentary concerning Article 11.

2 b

The Committee on Equality between Men and Women has been instructed by the Government to investigate the feasibility of legislation against sexually discriminatory advertising, and this investigation is now in progress.

2 e

The Committee on Equality between Men and Women has been engaged since 1980 in a project entitled Equal Sporting Opportunities, together with the Municipality of Gävle and the Swedish Sports Federation. One of the purposes of this project is to improve opportunities for women in one of Sweden's largest mass movements, i.e. the sports movement.

2 g

Although there are no rules conflicting with this paragraph, there are a number of practical impediments.

Women sentenced to imprisonment have not previously had the same opportunities as men of being placed according to the "proximity principle" laid down in the 1974 criminal welfare reform. This principle implies that a person receiving a short prison sentence or approaching the completion of a longer one must have the option of placement in a penal institution close to his or her home area so as to have better opportunities of contact with local social welfare authorities and next of kin.

For a long time there was only one penal institution for women.x) In recent years, particular attention has been paid to the situation of women in this respect, above all in connection with the planning of new local prisons and the enlargement of pre-existing ones. Most new local prisons can now admit women, and similar facilities have also been established at older prisons. By the end of 1981, there were 51 places for women divided between 15 penal institutions, not including the women's prison at Hinseberg. Geographically speaking, women can now be admitted from Umeå in the north to Malmö in the south. When the local prison programme has been fully implemented, the "proximity principle" will be fully applicable to the placement of women as well as men.

x) in Sweden

Article 4

The Act Concerning Equality between Women and Men

at Work (otherwise known as the Equal Opportunities Act) , which came into force on 1st July 1980 (App. 5), sanctions what is termed positive discrimination (Section 3) in connection with hiring, promotion or training for promotion, if the employer can establish that this forms part of efforts for the promotion of sexual equality at work. Cf. remarks relating to Article 11.

Article 5

See remarks concerning Articles 10 and 11.

5 a

The goal of freedom of choice included in the guidelines of minority policy adopted by the Riksdag in 1975 means that immigrants domiciled in Sweden must be given the opportunity of deciding for themselves the extent to which they are to retain and develop their original cultural identity and the extent to which thery are to assume a Swedish cultural identity.The Committee on Immigrant Policy appointed in 1980 has been instructed to draft a closer definition of the goal of freedom of choice designed to avoid the acceptance of values which are contrary to fundamental Swedish legal principles concerning, for example, the equality between men and women.

5 b

As part of the parental education project mounted by the National Board of Health and Welfare, a series of publications has been issued for maternity and child health care personnel. One of the most recently issued of these publications deals with "Alcoholism, drug abuse and pregnancy - what can the midwife do?", and it describes ways of dealing with the alcohol question in the context of maternity health care. The Board is currently collating the results of a questionnaire in the autumn of 1981 in which the county councils, as the agencies responsible for health and medical care, were asked how far they had progressed with parental education.

Special material is being compiled for the further training of maternity and child health care personnel working in areas with large numbers of immigrant families.

Article 6

The Riksdag has passed various amendments to the Public Order Statute. The main import of these amendments, which became law on 1st July 1982, is to prohibit public performances of a pornographic nature. The prostitution which is to a great extent facilitated by sex club activities is expected to diminish through the implementation of this provision. The prohibition carries penal sanctions, comprising fines and imprisonment for up to six months.

During 1980 the National Board of Health and Welfare held two seminars for staff of outpatient care units and treatment centres for drug abusers, on matters relating to sexuality and sex roles. The report, from July 1981, shows that prostitution, sexual oppression, intimidation, contempt and hostility towards the opposite sex are common among alcoholics and drug abusers. The purpose of the seminar was to make personnel better equipped to meet and deal with problems of this kind. A follow-up has shown that this aim was achieved.

Article 10

10 a

The Committee on Equality between Men and Women, acting on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Minister, launched an information drive in the spring of 1982 aimed at widening the scope of educational and vocational decisions by young persons, and especially by girls. This drive is being conducted at both national and local levels. The local level comprises seven municipalities, each of which is testing a particular model of vocational information. Information material on vocational decisions has been distributed to all senior level compulsory schools (ages 13-16) in the country, for discussion in class.

10 c

In November 1977 the National Board of Education(NBE) adopted an action programme for work in schools relating to equal opportunities and sex roles. This programme lays down that work for greater sexual equality must result in the following:

- Equality between men and women
- Equal responsibilities for the family and society
- Genuinely equal opportunities of choosing occupation in the family, in gainful employment and in public life.

The measures taken by the NBE on the basis of the action programme have among other things resulted in amendments to the Education Act and the Education Ordinance underlining the duty of local education authorities,chief education officers and heads of schools to promote equality between men and women. In this way, work in schools for the promotion of equal opportunities has been established on a firmer foundation.

The goal of equal opportunities has been clearly expressed in the new Compulsory School Curriculum (Lgr 80) which has been passed by the Riksdag and will become fully operational in the 1982/83 school year. Lgr 80 also contains several important premises of work for the promotion of equal opportunities, such as the following.

- Child care and home economics are compulsory subjects at senior level and must accordingly be taken by both boys and girls. Home economics is also compulsory at intermediate level and is included in general subjects at junior level. This is an important part of efforts to achieve shared responsibilities for home life and the family.

- Technology is a compulsory science subject, which means that in future it will be taken by pupils of both sexes. Previously, technology was an optional subject at senior level and was taken almost exclusively by boys.

- The system of optional subjects has been radically changed, partly in order to achieve a more equal balance of the sexes in various optional courses. The regulations contained in Lgr 80 stipulate that courses must be arranged in such a way "that they cannot be expected to incur a heavy sexual bias. Should such a bias nonetheless occur, and should further information fail to produce results, the syllabus must be revised." An evaluation of options prior to the autumn term 1982 has shown that measures of this kind are most likely to be needed for courses in natural sciences, technology and languages.

- As a result of practical work experience (PRAO), all senior level pupils are to gain experience of each of the following three occupational sectors: technology and manufacturing; trade, communication, services, agriculture and forestry; clerical and administrative work, care and education. In this connection, schools are to encourage pupils to familiarize themselves with occupations dominated by men and women respectively.

- Handicraft teaching comprises two types of handicraft for all pupils, viz textile work and, secondly, woodwork and metal work. At senior level, however, pupils are allowed to choose tasks within either type. As result of all pupils being given instruction in both types of handicraft, boys and girls will acquire skills which used to be mainly reserved for women and men respectively.

- Typing practice forms part of various school subjects. If both sexes learn to type, this can contribute towards greater equality.

- As a general rule, boys and girls are to share sports lessons throughout elementary school. The sports syllabus does not include any provisions regarding the composition of sports groups, but the Riksdag resolution on the curriculum states that co-education should be the main principle applied and that pupils should not be grouped by sex other than for special items. In connection with this resolution, the NBE has issued general recommendations advocating this type of arrangement as a means of evening out the sex roles and promoting equality between men and women.

Many study routes in upper secondary school have displayed considerable sexual bias for several years where recruitment is concerned. Sexually biased choices have not changed appreciably since the present integrated upper secondary school came into being in 1971. Although boys and girls have formal access to all study routes, in practice a division has taken place whereby arts and social studies have come to be dominated by girls and scientific and technical studies by boys. The NBE has endeavoured to overcome this problem by various means.

Activities by the NBE during the 1981/82 school year included a major central information drive aimed among other things at drawing the attention of girls to the negative effects of sexually biased choices on their employment prospects.

In order to support girls in their educational and vocational choice, the NBE obtained Government permission to arrange, during the 1981/82 school year, a special four-week introductory programme for girls about to enter upper secondary school.

A new admission system, whereby sex may, on certain conditions, influence a candidates ability to gain admission to a study route of first preference, is being applied by upper secondary schools for the 1982/83 school year. The principle is that a candidate applying for a study route in which the opposite sex predominates can be credited with 0.2 point extra. This may possibly encourage girls to broaden their range of educational choices above all so as to include vocational technical studies.

In 1976 the NBE introduced compulsory basic training for school management including special community practice, as part of which a special project, "Equal opportunities in school", has been conducted in collaboration with the Committee on Equality between Men and Women. A report on this project was presented in the spring of 1982.

A "Development plan for child care" was presented to the Government in May 1982 by the National Board of Health and Welfare. This plan, which is aimed at improving the instructional content of child care, points among other things to the importance of children in leisure centres being helped to develop a sexual identity and sex role behaviour which will utilize the assets and development potential of the individual. It is between the ages of 9 and 14 that the foundations of values are laid, moral development takes shape and attitudes towards the opposite sex are established.

The National Board of Universities and Colleges is conducting a project entitled "Equal opportunities in higher education", the aim of which is to co-ordinate various measures for the promotion of equality between men and women in higher education. Work so far has been mainly concerned with equal opportunities in research and research training and has among other things led to the establishment of interdisciplinary base organizations for equal opportunities research at the six universities. In addition the National Board of Universities and Colleges, in the course of its R & D activities, has compiled documentation in which to base further measures for the promotion of equality between men and women.

10 e and f

Under the GRUNDVUX basic adult education scheme, municipalities have been able ever since 1976 to provide instruction for adults whose previous education, if any, has been inadequate. Annual evaluations have shown that immigrant women constitute a large proportion of the total number of GRUNDVUX participants. (Two-thirds of the participants are immigrants, and two-thirds of the immigrant participants are women.) GRUNDVUX opportunities for immigrant women hinge to a great extent on the ability of municipal authorities to cater for their child-minding requirements. Some municipalities have been able to solve this problem on a selective basis and have thus increased the numbers of immigrant women taking part. The special student benefit paid to GRUNDVUX participants in the form of hourly benefit provides women with an additional incentive for taking part, since home-makers are also entitled to it.

GRUNDVUX studies are an important part of efforts to achieve greater equality between men and women, above all because it gives immigrant women a chance of improving their position. In addition to literacy training, this education is also aimed at conferring compulsory school qualifications corresponding to grade 6, which can then be followed by higher studies

or vocational education. Instruction, moreover, is adapted to the information needs of immigrant women concerning such matters as contraception, child education, diet and consumer affairs.

VERKsam, a joint body concerned with aspects of equality between men and women and including representatives of several authorities and organizations, devoted special attention during 1980/81 to the situation of immigrant women and girls, while in 1981/82 it concentrated on handicapped women. An action programme was drawn up including the following points:

- Improved knowledge about and more responsibility on behalf of immigrant pupils, especially girls, in compulsory and upper secondary school. This includes, for example, knowledge of the reasons why some immigrant pupils/girls refrain from applying for upper secondary school and of the degree of success achieved in their upper secondary schooling by those who do apply.

- Better educational opportunities for adult immigrant women. Particular emphasis is here placed on Swedish language instruction opportunities for women and on child care problems.

- Improved knowledge concerning the employment situation of immigrant women and better opportunities of utilizing bilingualism as a resource in various occupational fields.

Article 11

11:1 a-d

The Act Concerning Equality between Women and Men at Work (otherwise known as the Equal Opportunities Act, App. 5) came into force on 1st July 1980, and at the same time the Government appointed an Equal Opportunities Ombudsman and an Equal Opportunities Commission to ensure that this Act was complied with. The purpose of the Act is to promote the rights of men and women concerning employment, working conditions and educational opportunities at work. The Act prohibits the discrimination of employees or job applicants by employers on grounds of sex, and it enjoins all employers to make specific efforts for the active promotion of equality between men and women at work. The statutory rules against sexual discrimination are mandatory. The rules concerning active promotion of equality between men and women, on the other hand, can be replaced or supplemented by collective agreements. Agreements of this kind already exist, both in the private and the public sector.

The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, at present with a personnel strength of five, must try to induce employers to comply with the provisions of the Act,

preferably on a voluntary basis. Failing this, the Ombudsman can bring the dispute before the Labour Court in matters of sexual discrimination or, when demanding active measures, apply to the Equal Opportunities Commission for a writ of subpoena.

It is also the task of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman to inform the general public and to participate in efforts for the promotion of equality between men and women at work.

The Equal Opportunities Commission has eleven members, including representatives of the social partners. The Commission's foremost task is to consider applications by the Ombudsman for writs of subpoena against employers.

During the first two years following the Ombudsman's appointment a total of 630 cases have been reported or have been raised at the instance of the authority itself. 230 of the reported cases concern discrimination on grounds of sex and 130 relate to deficiencies in the measures taken by employers to promote equality between men and women at work.

Trade union organizations have also filed proceedings in the Labour Court. The Swedish Industrial Salaried Employees' Association (SIF) won a case concerning sexual discrimination in connection with a municipal appointment; the Swedish Journalists' Union withdrew an action concerning sexual discrimination in the form of lower pay for equivalent work, after a settlement had been reached out of court; and the Swedish National Union of Insurance Company Employees (FTF) has filed proceedings concerning sexual discrimination through the selection of a male claims adjuster at an insurance company.

Several of the reports of sexual discrimination made to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman have ended in settlement out of court. In one case the wages of female industrial workers were raised to the same level as those paid to men, while in another case a woman operating a dock crane obtained permanent employment after many years on the reserve.

During the current year, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman has held a seminar on job valuation and wage fixing together with representatives of certain union organizations (Article 11.1.d.).

An exhaustive account of the Ombudsman's work will be found in App. 3.

At the same time as the Equal Opportunities Act became law, on 1st July 1980, a new Equal Opportunities (State Employment) Ordinance (1980:540) also came into force. Under this Ordinance, national authorities have to submit annual reports concerning the following:

1. Plans, decisions or other measures designed for the promotion of equality between male and female employees.

2. The results of these measures.

3. Other circumstances with a bearing on the promotion of equality between men and women at work.

These reports have to be submitted to the Government Employment Board (SAMN), which is centrally responsible for measures to promote the equality of the sexes in the national administration.

Legislation passed by the Riksdag in 1978 gave women access to certain military professions within the Air Force. In November 1981 the Riksdag passed a Government Bill eliminating sexual bias in the recruitment of officers in the armed forces.

The Labour Market Ordinance and its own Standing instructions make the Labour Market Administration specially responsible for promoting the equality of men and women in the labour market. An account of efforts by the Administration in this respect will be found in App. 3, p. 8, to which the following can be added.

One of the aims defined in the guidelines laid down by the National Labour Market Board for the activities of county employment boards between October 1981 and April 1982 was that of reducing the proportion of women among residual job applicants at employment offices to about 45 per cent, which is also women's share of the workforce. The means employed to this end was the priority treatment of placement resources for female applicants which had been tested in connection with a project in the County of Jönköping. The results show that the proportion of women among residual job applicants fell from 56 per cent in October 1981 to 49 per cent in April 1982.

One of the objectives of labour market training is to help achieve greater equality of opportunities between different groups by supporting those who are at the greatest disadvantage in the labour market. The National Labour Market Board (AMS) and the NBE have been operating a joint programme, "Equal opportunities in labour market training", since 1979. This programme includes goals and guidelines for efforts by the Labour Market Administration and the NBE to promote equal opportunities in the context of labour market training.

In 1980, job applicants uncertain regarding their choice of occupation and employment were given the opportunity of trying their hand at non-traditional

vocational courses at labour market training centers for one month on training grants. This arrangement has proved to be a good way of interesting women in training for employment in engineering workshops, for example.

County employment boards have concluded co-operation agreements during the period covered by this report with engineering firms needing to recruit skilled labour. The firms have undertaken to recruit women who have completed suitable labour market training for the jobs concerned.

The National Labour Market Board (AMS) is extending this arrangement throughout the country in order to conclude agreements with firms needing to recruit more labour, so as to ensure that recruitment includes a certain proportion of women. These efforts have gained the support of the Swedish Metal Trades Employers' Association and the Swedish Metal Workers' Union.

Equal opportunities grants have been payable since 1974 to employers who hire and train persons for certain non-traditional occupations. As from 1st July 1979, these grants were raised to SEK 20/hour, in the expectation that this would lead to a steep rise in the number of grants awarded. No such rise occurred, however, and consequently the grant has not come to play the part that AMS had expected it to.

During the 1979/80 fiscal year, equal opportunities grants were awarded to 291 companies for 883 persons, while during the 1980/81 fiscal year they were awarded to 278 companies for 617 persons.

In its budget requests for fiscal year 1982/83, AMS has requested that the equal opportunities grant be amalgamated with the grant towards training for established employees combined with the recruitment of replacements. AMS' proposal provides for a training grant of SEK 20 per hour to the replacement as well if the replacement employee is recruited from a "non-traditional sex" or the established employee is trained for a non-traditional job. The Riksdag has given its approval for this amalgamation of the two types of grant, but the detailed conditions have yet to be defined. The grant will become available as from 1st July 1982.

In the spring of 1982, the Committee on Equality between Men and Women presented a report to the Equal Opportunities Minister concerning "Gainful employment and parenthood" (SOU 1982:18). This report recommends specific measures to faciliate gainful employment for women and employment in the home for men.

11:1 e

As from 1st January 1982, supplementary pension insurance has been combined with a rule concerning parents who refrain from gainful employment in order to look after their own children. The rule is that a parent looking after a child under 3 for the greater part of a calendar year can be credited for this period on the same terms as gainful employment. With certain exceptions, a "curative year" of this kind is equated with years for which the person concerned earns pension credits. In practice this rule is most likely to benefit women.

11:1 f

The new Work Environment Act which came into force on 1st July 1978 does not contain any special provisions concerning women, apart from a provision about leave of absence for nursing mothers. If, however, a certain type of work entails a special hazard for certain groups of employees, the National, Board of Occupational Safety and Health can debar the employees concerned from that work or can make the work itself subject to special conditions. This power can be exercised, for example, with reference to hazards during pregnancy, as in an Ordinance (1982:1) of February 1982 which stipulates medical examinations in connection with work involving the use of lead.

Article 16

16 g

A new Names Act, passed by the Riksdag in June 1982, comes into force on 1st January 1983. One of the premises of the new Act has been the change undergone by attitudes towards the relationship of men and women since the previous Act was passed in 1963. Introducing the Bill, the Minister responsible referred to this change and said that efforts were now being made to establish equality between the sexes in every field. This made the law on names one of the fields where a particularly strong need was felt for changes compatible with the equality of the sexes.

In order for the new Names Act fully to reflect contemporary attitudes concerning relations between the sexes, the rules which it contains on the subject of surnames do not give priority to the surname of either husband or wife when a marriage is contracted. Instead the couple can agree to share either the husband's or the wife's surname, or alternatively they can elect to retain separate surnames. In the latter case, one spouse can combine his or her surname with the other's to indicate the union between them. The new Act does not contain any provisions enabling unmarried couples to acquire a common surname

The rules laid down by the new Act concerning children's surnames are unaffected by the parents being married or unmarried. If the parents share a common surname, that name will pass to their children. If the parents have different surnames, they - or the parent having custody, as the case may be - can choose between giving their children the father's or mother's surname. The only stipulation is that full siblings must be given the same surname. Parents can also give their children the surname borne by one parent before marriage if that name was altered as a result of marriage. A child having only one parent's surname can combine it with the other parent's surname in order, for example, to indicate its relationship to both parents.

The new Names Act contains more generous provisions than its predecessor concerning changes of name by spouses and children.

The new Act has made it possible to revert to naming practices which were employed long ago, in that a person may apply to adopt a surname comprising the father's or mother's given name plus the ending "son" or "dotter" (i.e. Daughter). Where the mother's given name is concerned, this facility also represents an innovation compared with earlier practice.